

For the Pres^d M^r Woods.

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O R A T I O N

ON THE UTILITY OF

PUBLIC INFIRMARIES.

OCCASIONED BY THE

Opening of the RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY at OXFORD.

By JOSEPH BROMEHEAD, M. A. of QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

L O N D O N,

Sold by J. and F. RIVINGTON, in St. Paul's Church-Yard;
and D. PRINCE, in OXFORD.

MDCCLXXII.

[Price One Shilling.]



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following little Piece was hastily drawn up in the Year 1769, when the Heads of the University announced their Intention of opening the *Radcliffe* Infirmary with an *Encœnia*. They afterwards dropped this Design. But the Author having lately employed a leisure Hour in correcting and somewhat enlarging his ORATION, now begs Leave to lay it before the Public.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

THE following facts have been fully proved
up in the Year 1860, when the State of the
Union was in the midst of a great
struggle for the Liberty of the Slave.
They afterwards dropped the Liberator. But
the Author having lately completed a history
of the in correcting and forwarding out of the
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A N
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IF we closely examine the moral Qualities, which are denominated Virtues, and which Mankind have agreed to honour with Applause, we shall find that almost all regard Man, as he is a social Being, born to do good Offices to others. Upon this Principle it is found likewise, that our Approbation of virtuous Actions, is usually proportioned to the Extent of their Influence and Utility. Thus a Legislator and a Patriot must ever be more admired than a Man of Prudence, Wisdom, and Integrity, exerted only in the contracted Sphere of private Life.

BUT of all the social Qualities, Benevolence is the most immediately useful. It is indeed the Source of all the rest,
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and naturally induces that great End and Cement of Society, mutual Beneficence. This Virtue too, like all others, becomes more illustrious in Proportion as its Consequences are more extended.

To the strong and universal Prevalence of this amiable Quality it is owing, that the Magistrates and Legislators, in most Countries, have instituted some Provision to alleviate the Miseries of the Indigent and Helpless. This also, in the opulent, the liberal, and the ingenuous, has produced the undertaking of Works of the present Kind, of Hospitals, Infirmarys, and Receptacles for the Relief of various Distresses.

INDEED the Goods of Fortune, the Means of Health and Felicity, which come to the Rich by Inheritance or Acquisition, are not their sole exclusive Property. The Poor have a Claim of Right for their Share. And the Relation that subsists between them and the Rich, certainly obliges the latter to assist them under Diseases, Casualties, and heavy Calamities.

IT

It perhaps may not be unnecessary to remind the Sons of Ease and Affluence, that the laborious Poor not only form the Bulk of the Nation, but are likewise the Part on which the Strength, the Prosperity, and even the Existence of the Whole depends. To them, as distributed through the humbler and more toilsome Offices of Society, we owe all the Necessaries of Life, and all its Conveniencies. The Labour of the Husbandman, the Manufacturer, and Mechanic, is confessedly essential to the Welfare of the Community; and yet a present Subsistence for themselves and their Families is their only Recompence. Every Sun rises to light them to their fatiguing Labour, which often ends not with the closing Day. They contentedly toil on from Youth to Age, and while they perhaps repose their weary Limbs in the Hut of Poverty, see their Sons entering upon the same Course of unnoticed Hardships and unrewarded Industry. Surely then their Lot at the best is not to be envied. But what a deplorable Change must they feel, should they be attacked by any one of that Host of Diseases which make such Havock amongst the human Race? That Strength which supported them in their daily Toil, now

fails them ; that Health of Body and Ease of Mind which lightened the Burthen of Poverty, are now no more. Sicknefs, by disabling them from earning a Subfiftence, occasions Want, and Want excludes the Means of Recovery from Sicknefs. The two greateft of natural Evils united, double each other's Weight, and accumulate Distrefs. Thus, in more fultry Climes, the fcorching Sun every where oppreffes the fainting Traveller with his Beams, but fhould they be reflected from the Declivity of fome barren Mountain, the Heat becomes intolerable, the very Air is tainted, and all Nature fickens.

WITHOUT Health, without the Means of recovering it, or even of fubfifting, whither then muft thefe abandoned Sons of Affliction look for Relief? To the cafual Munificence of private Benefactors? Uncertain, hopelefs Proſpect! To their own Friends or Kindred? Alas! their Pity is all they have to beſtow. To their Children (ſince ſome of them no doubt are Fathers of Families)?—But here the Scene is truly calamitous. The little Mourners ſtand round the ſick Bed of their Parent, and while they feel, deeply feel for his Sufferings,

Sufferings, cannot be insensible to their own. He turns an hopeless Eye towards them, perceives them in Want of that Bread which he had hitherto provided for them by his Labour, perceives them foretasting those Distresses which, at his Death, are to be their sad Inheritance.

BUT waving these peculiar Circumstances of Misery, let us only reflect on that Variety of Distempers to which Poverty is exposed, without the Means of Relief. And in this View, what Objects of Compassion present themselves before us? Objects which must awe the Pride of Man, and awaken his Tendernefs.

“ Numbers of all diseas’d, all Maladies,
Of ghastly Spasm, or racking Torture, Qualms
Of heart-sick Agony, all feverous Kinds,
Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs,
Intestine Stone and Ulcer, Colic Pangs,
Demoniac Phrenzy, moping Melancholy,
And Moon-struck Madness, pining Atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting Pestilence,
Dropfies and Asthmas, and joint-racking Rheums.”

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WHAT

WHAT a Group of human Miseries ! All various, yet all languid, deformed, and loathsome. A benevolent Mind shudders at their very Names. But could you have the wretched Sufferers before your Sight, could you mark the dire tossing of restless Anguish, and listen to the deep Groans of Despair, surely every Eye would drop a sympathizing Tear, and every gentle Heart would bleed.

IT may justly be a Matter of Wonder that our civil Police has made none, or at least no adequate Provision for the Poor when labouring under these Calamities. They are the Servants of the Public, and therefore entitled to its Protection. Besides, a stronger Tye subsists. They whose Distresses thus loudly implore our Compassion, what are they ? Want, indeed, and Misfortunes have much disguised them, and Misery hath worn them to the Bone. Yet they have the same Nature, and except a few accidental variable Distinctions, are the same with us. They have an Original alike divine, a Mind alike intelligent. To be a Man, and to be miserable, is a sufficient Claim, on the generous and humane. Shall we then leave those to perish, whom it is the Interest of their Country, and the Duty of
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all Mankind to assist and preserve? Medicine, and every other Relief in the Calamity of bodily Diseases, are natural Provisions for the present indigent and infirm State of the Sons of Men. In Spite, indeed, of all these Assurances, Sickness will still slay its Thousands, and thin the World by its destroying Sword. But nothing surely can more contradict the Order of Nature and the Will of Providence, than that Numbers should fall Victims, not so much to the Fury of Disease, as to the Neglect and Cruelty of those who ought to supply them with the Means of Recovery. Yet how many of our sick and disabled Poor must be left to this unhappy Lot, if no public Infirmaries are established to receive them?

THESE, indeed, open their friendly Doors for such poor deserted Wretches, these bind up their Wounds, and exert all the Power of Medicine to heal their Diseases.

WHERE no charitable Asylums of this Kind are erected, it is a common Resource with our sick Poor, though a fatal one, to apply to mercenary and pernicious Empirics, whose Ignorance either immediately deprives them of their

Lives, or injures their Healths beyond Reparation. But in these Houses of Charity they are sure to find able Physicians, and every Thing provided for their Conveniency and Cure that Art can suggest or Munificence supply.

PUBLIC Infirmaries are not only the best, but the only Means by which the necessitous can procure the several Kinds of Assistance which their various bodily Diseases require. In large commercial Towns, what other Provision can be made against those Casualties which so frequently happen to the poor labouring Part of the Inhabitants, or to the still more unfortunate Stranger?

HERE give me leave to add to these general Advantages, one peculiar to this Place. A Fashion has of late prevailed, to send such of our Youth as are designed for the Profession of Physic, to foreign Academies, which, though far inferior to our own in every other Respect, have been thought superior in this. The Reason of a Custom so injurious to the Interest of our Country, and the Honour of our Seats of Learning, is far from being satisfactory; however, by the present Institution, the very Shadow of it is removed.

removed. Important as every public Infirmary must be, the Importance of this is still more extensive. It affords not only the best Assistance to the sick and disabled, but likewise the best Opportunities of Observation and Improvement to young Students in the medical Science, on whose future Skill so much depends. It has the happy, the singular Excellence of at once relieving the Misery of Individuals, and making that Misery beneficial to the Community. We now, at length, may justly boast that ours is the most compleat Seminary in *Europe* for so important a Study, whether we regard Botany, Anatomy, the Theory or Practice of Medicine. To no Profession is Learning more necessary: and here Students can best consult the rich Treasures of Antiquity, and the Parents of the healing Art: here they may add every liberal Accomplishment, and acquire that general and extensive Knowledge for which the *English* Physicians are deservedly distinguished. When we consider the general and local Advantages of the Infirmary here erected, what public Honours and Benefits may we not date from this auspicious *Æra*? May we not foretell, that as our *Alma Mater* already reckons in the list of her

Sons,

Sons, the greatest Names in Medicine, she will now add to the glorious Catalogue, and see in her Train future *Linacres, Willis's, Radcliffes, and Friends*, who shall emulate the Science and Reputation of those who have gone before them ?

BUT enough perhaps has been said to prove how much these Institutions concern the public Interest and Honour : Indeed one would think it impossible that any Persons should object to, or refuse supporting these excellent Undertakings, which are so beneficial in all their Views : one would think it, I say, impossible. But if any such should be, with such we will not contend. Let Avarice refuse its Assistance, and, if possible, its Applause.

THOUGH publick Infirmaries have political Advantages so undeniable and self-evident, yet we may safely affirm that they stand on a firmer Basis, that they are supported by Arguments stronger than the Deductions of Reason ; Arguments which every generous Breast must feel. When we reflect on the Malignity of the Diseases, the Weight
of

of the complicated Afflictions which they are intended to relieve, we are, we cannot but be interested and disposed to compassionate the Sufferers, partly from the Consciousness of being liable to the same Evils, and partly from thy nobler Impulses, O Benevolence! Here the truly humane Mind, like a well-tuned Instrument of Musick, obeys the sudden Touches of Pity, and the sweet Harmony of its social Affections, wholly passive in the Sympathy of its own Goodness. While the Rich and Powerful indulge the tender Sensations of Humanity, and promote such well-plann'd Works of Beneficence as the present Institution, they at once communicate Happiness to others, and inexpressibly augment their own. They feel, that they are obeying the Dictates of purest Nature, and wisest Reason; that they are fulfilling the Ends of Society, and the Will of its great Author, whose darling Attribute is Mercy, whose very Essence is Love. Most wisely did he distribute Men into these subordinate Ranks, and implant these generous Principles.

——“ He form'd a Whole, the Whole to bless;

“ On mutual Wants built mutual Happiness.”

WHATEVER

WHATEVER may be the Vices of the present Age, the most censorious Cynick must allow that it has its Share of that Philanthropy and Tendernefs which we would here recommend. History informs us that it was the barbarous Policy of some ancient States to expose Infants if infirm, to abandon diseased Persons, and even to destroy those who were rendered useless to the Community by Age and Decrepitude. But polished Times and Nations are Strangers to such unfeeling Sentiments. A Disposition to Compassion and to Offices of Kindness will ever gain Ground in Proportion to Civilization, and improved Elegance of Manners. Perhaps this Virtue expands itself most, when the Powers of the Mind are softened by Luxury, and all other Virtues are in the Wane. It is certain that the earliest Societies had less of it; Warriors and Heroes were their greatest Characters.

HOWEVER this may be, I need not hesitate to congratulate my Country, since a bountiful and beneficent Spirit is, and has ever been its national Characteristick. For this, I may appeal even to the ruder Ages of Ignorance
and

and Superstition, to those hospitable and intentionally Religious, to those venerable and princely Foundations, over whose general undistinguished Ruins, Humanity and Piety must for ever mourn. Through the mistaken Zeal of our Ancestors, these abounded more in our Isle than in any other Christian Country. And if at their Dissolution, these noble Edifices and Endowments had been applied to the Uses which the publick Interest required; Poverty, Sicknes, and decrepit Age had never wanted an Asylum, nor had the sacred Will of the Dead been so flagrantly violated, or their Ashes so impiously disturbed. Some of them it must be owned in the Capital, by the Care and Earnestness of an excellent Prelate, were saved from the sacrilegious Talons of Court-Harpies, and consecrated to the Relief of Misery and Disease. But so small was the Number, that it seemed only to point out how much might and ought to have been done, had the least Degree of publick Spirit, Justice, or Honour influenced those infamous Plunderers. Here then was lost the grand Opportunity of establishing Receptacles for Distress in every Part of the Kingdom; and with equal Indignation

and Sorrow must we look back on this deep, this indelible Stain of the Annals of our Reformation.

BUT now indeed we see fairer and brighter Prospects around us. A Spirit of Charity has diffused itself amongst all Ranks of People, amongst our Merchants, our Lawgivers, and Nobles. The Liberality of our Forefathers is at least equalled, and their Wisdom in choosing Objects of that Liberality much surpassed. In our Metropolis, almost every Species of Distress has been considered, pitied, and relieved.

THE deserted Infant, whose Misfortunes begin with its Existence, meets that Redress for which it cannot petition.

THE unhappy Prostitute, though she has survived Innocence, finds she has not survived Compassion, she sees an hospitable Retreat open for her Misery and Shame, sees a friendly Hand reached out to recover her stumbling Feet to the Paths of Virtue and Peace.

I MIGHT

I MIGHT lead your Attention to that Mansion within whose Walls we behold the noble Fabrick of the Human Mind in its melancholy Ruins.—But this is a Sight of all others, the most humiliating and painful. For Persons in a State so consummately calamitous, the bleeding Pity of their Fellow-Citizens has made a munificent Provision;—like the wounded Tree of *Arabia*, it weeps healing Balm.

WORTHY the Kings of a martial and generous People are those royal Foundations, which receive the maimed Veteran, who has fought the Battles of his Country. There after all his Toils and Dangers he sits down to recite in the honest Loquacity of Age his hardy Deeds, and count his glorious Scars.—Brave Man! Peaceful shall be the Evening of a Life exposed in the Service of *Britain*;—thy hoary Head is covered with well-earned Laurels!

I NEED not mention the various Infirmarys and Hospitals for the Sick. Enough has already been said on the Excellence of these Houses of Mercy; and this is a Species

of patriotick Charity which has not been confined to our chief City. In other Parts of the Kingdom, Receptacles have been established for those who groan under the complicated Wretchedness of Poverty and Disease. And every one of this illustrious Audience, every one (I doubt it not) will join me in wishing that the Streams of Beneficence may still flow in so useful a Channel, and that each of our provincial Towns may be blest with such an Institution as that which *Oxford* at length enjoys.

WHILST the benevolent Speculatist, the sincere Lover of his Country contemplates all these Establishments as the Monuments of national Virtue, and the Sources of innumerable Advantages to the State; the Lover of the Arts will consider them in an additional Point of View, will regard the Structures which are destined to the Purposes of public Munificence as exhibiting to foreign Nations and to Posterity, the most striking Proofs of the Taste and Magnificence of his Countrymen and Contemporaries. The Houses of private Citizens (however opulent) are seldom equal in the Beauty of their Structure

to

to Edifices of publick Use and Contrivance. Where the Purposes of private and domestick Utility are only to be answered, the Genius of the Artist is necessarily circumscribed: He may indeed in these give Proofs of the Elegance of his Taste, and the Correctness of his Ideas; but from the Grand and Magnificent he is unavoidably precluded. But public Edifices of every Kind, have most of all, contributed to display the Arts of Design in their full Lustre, in every Age and Country where those Arts have been cultivated. To them we owe the Memory both of laudable Actions and of illustrious Artists; and by them the flourishing Nations of Antiquity have transmitted to us the most durable Records of their former Splendor and Greatness. To them the first, and most celebrated Cities of the World at this Day owe their chief Ornament.

THE Number of magnificent Churches, Colleges, and other publick Buildings throughout the Christian Boundaries, and especially in *Italy*, have afforded an ample Field to the Genius of the Architect, the Statuary, and the Painter.

Painter. In one City only, the immense Fabrick of *St. Peter's*, the Church of *St. John Lateran*, the *Vatican Library*, the Hospital of the *Holy Ghost*, and almost innumerable other Edifices of public Use, will always present *Rome*, though fallen from her ancient Glories, as highly deserving the Attention of the curious Traveller, and will immortalize the Names as well of those Artists who contributed their Talents to their Erection and Embellishment, as of the Popes their Patrons.

IN *Spain*, in *France*, in our own Country, and in every Nation where the Arts have fixed their Residence, their Influence is most conspicuous in the Beauty and Grandeur of publick Structures.

No City or People can be more indebted for Decorations of this Kind to the Munificence of a private Citizen, than we are to that admirable Person, from whose extensive Benefactions to this Seminary hath arisen the Design and Establishment of an Infirmary in this Place. It would therefore be unjust to close these Reflections without some Tribute to his Memory.

SUPERIOR

SUPERIOR to the common Views of a lucrative Profession, he esteemed Wealth only valuable, as it enabled him to extend his good Offices to Mankind. Hence the vast Fortune which he acquired by his singular Talents in the important Science of Physick, was while he lived, a Fund of Charity and Beneficence; and the noble Bequests made by him at his Death to this Place of his Education, will continue the good Effects of his Liberality and his Gratitude to the remotest Times.

HE was a Man undoubtedly born for the Benefit and Ornament of his Country. His Virtues were of that Kind whose Lustre will appear more amiable to the undazzled Eye of Wisdom than the Trophies of Conquerors, and the splendid Qualities of those whom the ill-judging Multitude calls Great. Amongst the military Honours of ancient *Rome*, the only one perhaps, with which a benevolent Man would wish to intertwine his Brow, is the Civic Crown. And if he who preserved the Life of a single Citizen deserved to be so distinguished, what Crowns must we weave for RADCLIFFE?—Such was the

the Wisdom which guided his beneficent Soul, such was the Propriety which regulated the Disposition of his Wealth, that though dead he still remedies the Distresses and Diseases of Men, and claims from them a daily-increasing Tribute of grateful Applause. The helpless Objects, who are relieved from Misery, or rescued from Death by his Bounty, shall hang around his Monument, the useless Crutch, and the votive Tablet.—Even those on whom Providence has bestowed Affluence, though they are not affected by his Munificence, may be animated by his Example.

BUT it is unnecessary to expatiate on Merit so transcendent, and I will not obscure his Praises by my feeble Attempts to display them. As the Benefits resulting from his well-directed and boundless Liberality, will assuredly extend to future Ages, we may safely trust his Fame to Posterity.

F I N I S



